

AUTOWEEK
VOLUME 26

32
NUMBER

**Dodge Brews
Up A Warlock**
Page 14

**A.J. Wins
Two In Texas**
Page, 18, 23

**First Ford
Fiesta Test**
Page 22

AUTOWEEK®
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75 CENTS

Petty Pocono Victor

By Al Pearce

MT. POCONO, Pa.—Richard Petty sauntered into the interview room, surrounded on all sides by brisk, efficient, no nonsense Pennsylvania State Patrol officers. He had donned his familiar wrap-around sunglasses the moment his crew got to him in victory lane here at the Pocono International Raceway. As usual, he hadn't bothered to take them off once inside.

In one hand was a wet, cool, red garage rag, the one he had carried with him throughout the third annual Purotor 500 NASCAR Winston Cup Grand National race. In the other was a tall, icy soft-drink cup of Maalox. he smiled easily as he met the press as a winner for the first time since late February way down in the Sandhills of North Carolina.

Petty was the most surprised person at PIR when the checkered flag fell on him at the end of the 500-mile race. With a shade over five miles to go David Pearson had a seemingly safe 1.1 second lead in his Purotor No. 21 Mercury out of the Wood brothers magic shop in the hills of Virginia. Buddy Baker was set for a good third-place run and Benny Parsons was locked into fourth.

Then, as has happened to Petty so many

Continued On Page 20

Ford Announces New Variable Carburetor

Ford Motor Company has announced that it is working on a new variable venturi carburetor for use on its 2.8-liter V6 and 302cid V8 engines.

The new carburetor, said to be "a completely new concept as far as American cars are concerned," is a Ford concept that will be targeted for use only in California for the time being, and only on engines coupled to automatic transmissions.

The main feature, said a Ford spokesman, is that the new carburetor significantly improves drivability because it allows better atomization of the air and fuel mixture and because it provides better fuel metering accuracy than most standard carburetors can.

Though the new Ford carburetor is said to be similar in concept to the well-known SU, a carburetor of British make that has been used on legions of imported cars over the years, there is no real functional similarity, according to a Ford spokesman. The Ford unit uses a pair of square venturis, a sliding vane and no choke plate. The sliding vane acts as the fuel/air metering mechanism and also as the choke plate. The new carburetor will be used on cars for the 1977 model year.



"And they're off in a cloud of dust—" The phrase fits the start of the Purotor 500 rather well, as David Pearson, left, and Cale Yarborough jump out to the front of the pack.

Norman Brust

LATE NEWS

● Bob Tullius is in the midst of tests with his Jaguar XJS race car and if those tests are successful, he plans to run the car for the first time at Brainerd August 7 and 8.

● The United Rubber Workers' strike continues (see news story) and while supplies of street tires are becoming tight, a spokesman for one of the struck firms says, "nobody's out of tires yet. Things aren't so rosy on the racing tire front, however, with some types of tires, sprint car tires for instance, becoming downright hard to find.

● Al Holbert has entered the August 15 Camel GT race at Pocono in his Monza, passing up the conflicting Brainerd TransAm date. His TurboCarrera will remain vacant for the race.

● After nine of 15 races, two of IMSA's Camel GT manufacturers

Continued On Page 3



McLaren's latest Formula One machine is dubbed the M26. The car weighs in at 1300 lbs.

New McLaren F-1 Racer

COLNBROOK, England—McLaren Racing has introduced its McLaren M26, the car that will replace the M23 Formula One machine.

The new car, shown to the press in completed form for the first time July 19, uses a sophisticated aircraft-like monocoque sandwich chassis, has considerably less frontal area than the M23 and is

said to be lighter, weighing in at 1300 lbs. The minimum weight in Formula One is 1265 lbs.

One of the points being specifically touted by McLaren is that the car is said to carry substantially improved driver protection. The forward part of the cockpit, for instance, carries an additional mono-

Continued On Page 3

Lauda Hurt, Hunt 1st

By Pete Lyons

ADENAU, Germany—Jochen Mass won the first German GP of the day. The track was damp at the startline, there were rain showers reported out around

Lauda Still Critical

MANNHEIM, Germany—World Driving Champion Niki Lauda, critically injured in a high-speed crash in the German Grand Prix August 1, still was listed as being in critical condition at presstime. Doctors said that the way his body responds to treatment in the next 10 days will determine whether or not Lauda will survive.

Lauda's most serious injury appears to be a pair of badly seared lungs from inhaling flame and hot gasses. He also suffered major burns to the top and right side of his head, a broken collarbone and two broken ribs. Lauda was on a respirator all day Aug. 2 but was taken off the machine Aug. 3. He is awake at intervals and is lucid; although he is unable to speak, he can communicate by nodding his head.

the circuit, the officials after dithering a while had declared it an officially "Wet Race." All around him on the grid drivers swapped to rain tires, but Jochen, sitting on the fifth row, decided to gamble on a spreading patch of blue sky to windward. Alone of the 26 starters, he stayed with slicks.

He was fourth into the first corner and third out of it. He fell back a few places in the next few miles, and at Breitscheid he was fifth and at the Karrusel he was sixth. But as the pack wound its way on around the Eiffel mountains, up to the

Continued On Page 8

ANNIVERSARY MGB AWARDED

The one-millionth Abingdon-built car, a green MGB, grand prize in the Bi-Centennial Rally of the 13 Colonial Capitals, was won by Brad Wladis and George Cookson, driving a 1949 MG TC. 2nd in the event, sponsored by British Leyland and organized by the MG Register, were Dave Roth and Len Reskenberger in a '53 MG TD. 3rd were Lou Zuger and Al Moss in a '49 TC.

Road Atlanta, July 18

GP	1st	Ransom Meade	Spitfire
HP	1st	Ray Stone	Sprite
FP	1st	Jack May	Spitfire
BS	1st	Rick Cline	TR Vitesse

Grattan, Mich. Aug. 1st

EP	1st	Terry Jask	MGB
FP	1st	Ed Amosson	Spitfire

Mid-America, Aug. 1st

DP	2nd	Dennis Wilson	TR6
FP	1st	Bob Hubbard	MG Midget
GP	1st	Chris Strong	Spitfire
HP	1st	Max Herrera	Sprite
CS	1st	John Ericson	Mini

CONGRATULATIONS
BRITISH LEYLAND COMPETITION DEPARTMENT

Alternate Power Source Study Brings Confusion

By Robert W. Irvin

DETROIT—Almost monthly, it seems, we read of some new report about an alternative to the conventional piston engine in today's cars.

Occasionally, we even learn of lengthy studies of various alternatives, trying to rate them in order of their potential.

It should come as no surprise to find that the results of one study contradict another.

Just how contradictory the studies actually are was revealed recently in a survey by General Motors Corp. of more than a score of such other studies.

What this tells us, of course, is that we should take these other studies with more than a grain of salt. The auto firm's study was conducted by Dr. William G. Agnew, technical director of the General Motors Research Laboratories.

Agnew was prompted to make his study by the latest survey of alternate power systems made by Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) on a contract for Ford Motor Co.

The study by JPL, best known for its work on the space program, concluded that the Stirling engine and the gas turbine offered the best hope for an alternate power source in the next decade. Ford recently has begun testing a

Torino with a Stirling engine installed by N.V. Phillips, the Dutch firm which holds the basic patents on the heat engine. But Ford President Lee A. Iacocca makes it clear there's much work to be done.

"I went for my first ride in the Stirling car the other day but didn't go very far," he said, telling listeners how the car conked out. "It reminded me of the first electric car I tried to drive and couldn't get out of the company garage."

"The gas turbine I tried got stuck on the highway and had to have a tow truck bring it back."

"These engines aren't perfected yet," Iacocca continued. "But the fuel economy of the Stirling is fantastic. We are proceeding to pour the coal to this program, but there are some problems."

Agnew's study makes it clear there are some problems to all the alternate engines. He said "one measure of the value of the JPL report can be judged by a comparison of the various conclusions" of 21 previous studies. Agnew said:

"It is readily apparent from a review of these conclusions that even though the various study groups used essentially the same set of facts, the studies reached quite different conclusions with respect to the potential of the various power plants. It is remarkable that such a wide disagreement exists."

"According to these studies the best alternate engine for the future ranges from steam to gas turbine, to a fuel injected, stratified, turbocharged rotary engine."

"Since all of these studies are generally evaluating the same technology, these differences in conclusions clearly point out the considerable uncertainty in forecasting future engine development."

"Many of the differences relate to a marked over optimism with regard to technological advances which are predicted to occur during the next few years."

Or, put another way, he said most studies about alternative power plants contain "an array of assumptions concerning how and when various obstacles will be overcome."

"Thus, the assumption is made that it is possible to 'schedule' technological breakthroughs. Past experience does not support this."

Agnew's study covered, besides the JPL report, ones made by the National Academy of Sciences, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation and the Department of Transportation—to name just some of the groups involved in the other reports.

He reviews the differences in each study on the various engines, and you find that engine characteristics one study likes, another study often dislikes.

One other thing to remember is that the engine now used in almost all cars—the Otto cycle—is 100 years old in 1976. That gives some indication of its staying power.

First Government Support Installment Due Leyland

British Leyland, Ltd., will receive a loan of about \$178 million from the U.K. government as the first installment of a long-term program of financial assistance. The National Enterprise Board, a government body which holds 95% interest in Leyland, has reviewed the company's performance since last October, according to U.K. Industry Secretary Eric Varley. The board is satisfied with Leyland's long-range corporate plan and has

observed a "trend of improvement," Varley said.

The British government devised a financial assistance plan in 1975, aiming at renovating Leyland through the infusion of several billion dollars. A large part of the funding now is slated to be directed into Leyland coffers before another major performance review next summer. The company probably will use the money for plant modernization and a program of new models.

The government cited "very encouraging progress" in overcoming employee-management antagonism at Leyland. In the eight months ending last May, the monthly average of worker hours lost through strike activities totalled 401,873, down from 670,459 hours lost during the six months prior to this period. Productivity was up 24% during the reporting period.

British Leyland also has shown profit increases recently. Net income during the fiscal first half, ended March 27, was \$9.9 million on sales \$1.74 billion, up from a year-earlier loss of \$77.3 million on sales of \$1.52 billion.

Rubber Talks Off, Strike Continues

AKRON, Ohio—After three days of talks in Washington last week, negotiations between striking United Rubber Workers members and major rubber producers have once again been terminated. No resumption of talks is scheduled at this time.

Labor secretary William J. Usery said in a speech in Texas that the next time the striking unions and the companies get together a settlement would be reached, but the feeling on the part of at least one company spokesman was that Usery's view was just a trifle optimistic.

Meanwhile, police arrested 34 striking rubber workers after a group of more than 200 strikers blocked an entrance to a Goodyear plant August 1. The group failed to disperse even after police read a court order forbidding such a gathering. Judge Sam Bell dealt out seven day suspended sentences to the 34 for violation of the court order.

Giacomelli Takes Brands F3

BRANDS HATCH, ENG.—Bruno Giacomelli, piloting his works March took the Formula three event held here July 17.

With the first of two qualifying/practice sessions held in the morning all ready gone, Boy Hayje set his Ralt up just right and grabbed the pole position with a 1:28.37sec timing. Sitting confidently beside Hayje was Jack Brabham's son, Geoffrey, who was behind the wheel of yet another Ralt. Giacomelli brought his time up from the morning session to take the third position on the front row with a time of 1:28.62sec and Gianfranco Brancatelli got his Everest March 763 sorted out to take the fourth fastest time and a place alongside Andersson on row two. Geoff Lees despite a tire that wanted to go elsewhere, took up a post on the third row at .29 flat next to New Zealander Brett Riley. Tiff Needell's Safir went .09sec slower than Riley to take up the outside position on the third row.

When Giacomelli finished the first lap, he had a train of Hayje, Andersson, Brancatelli, Brabham, and Lees trailing close behind. As the time changed, so did the leaders with Hayje, Andersson, and Lees all sharing the first place position. However, on the last lap, someone was careless with their motor oil and left it on the course only to have leader Giacomelli

spin and watch Andersson drive by safely. The 23-year-old Italian refused to let the win slip out of his hand that easily and managed to slide back on the track, drag race down a short chute and put the front end of his car into the leading Andersson's midsection. When it was all over, Giacomelli motored smoothly across the finish line with Andersson, Lees, Boy Hayje, Riley and Needell finishing in that order.

Foyt To Receive Malloy Award

A. J. Foyt, one of the most famous names in auto racing, has received the 1976 Jim Malloy Memorial Award from Thermo King Corporation.

The award is made annually by Thermo King to a driver entered in the Indianapolis 500, and judged to be "an exemplary competitor." The honoree receives \$500 and a specially-designed bronze plaque inscribed with his name, and also incorporating a deep-etched illustration of Malloy.

In addition to the individual plaque, a permanent plaque with each recipient's name is on display in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum.

LATE NEWS

Continued From Page 1

Grand Touring Over, 81 points to two (tie between Pantera and Ferrari), and the BMW CSL has locked up Touring Over honors, with 81 points to six for Capri.

● The SCCA's application for a preliminary injunction against David Ash and the North American Rally Assn. has been dismissed by Judge Robert Zampano in U.S. District Court in New Haven, Conn. Ash promised the court not to use the term, "Pro Rally" pending the final outcome of the lawsuit. The merits of the suit will be heard later in the fall.

● Benny Parsons has landed First National City Travelers Checks sponsorship for the remainder of this year's NASCAR season and beyond; this leaves only drag racing FNC is not involved in and the rumor mill has them looking there, too.

● Neil Bonnet rejoins the Grand National NASCAR ranks in his Chevy at Talladega with sponsorship from Hawaiian Tropic Sun Tan lotion.

● David Purley, the current leader of the British Shell sport series in a Chevron B35 March/Ford V6, will drive John Cannon's March in the Mid-Ohio episode of the SCCA/USAC Formula 5000 series.

● Other F5000 news: Two-time series champion Brian Redman will do the Mid-Ohio race in his new Lola T430.

● Labatt's Ontario Breweries will sponsor the Canadian Grand Prix, coming up Oct. 3 at Mosport Park.

More On: McLaren F1

Continued From Page 1

coque section, and the deformable structure around the driver is built as an integral part of the chassis. As well as making the driver safer, McLaren says these features give the car improved structural rigidity.

The new car, designed by Gordon Coppuck, will continue to use McLaren's six-speed transmission, compressed air starter, and trailing rear suspension. Front suspension is very similar to the current arrangement on the M23, using fabricated top rocker arms, inboard coil springs and Koni shock absorbers and a triangulated lower wishbone.

Testing so far has been carried out by Jochen Mass.

Said Teddy Mayer, managing director of McLaren Racing, "our philosophy at McLaren Racing is that everything you do on a race car is a compromise—it is not one single, brilliant idea that wins races. Most clever ideas require you to surrender something in the other areas, which you cannot always afford to do. The man with the greatest number of correct compromises designs the best car."

Heavy Duty Tach Introduced



Accutronic has introduced what it calls the ultimate tachometer for high performance use. The four inch mechanical unit uses a heavy duty drive mechanism and flyball governor and is claimed to give accuracy within 2% from 1000 to 11,500rpm under all conditions.

The dial features yellow markings on flat black, and has 9000 rpm at the top, so it can be installed straight up rather than twisted. A telltale needle is standard, as is a rev counter that records the number of total revolutions on the engine for maintenance and record-keeping purposes. It comes with side or back cable drive and works with all tach drive distributors or magnetos. For information, contact Accutronic, Box 142, Branford, Conn. 06406.

More On: German GP

Continued From Page 1

Karrussel and down to the Schwalbenschwanz, the other 25 runners had to face the fact that the track was more dry than it was wet. Even at the pits it had stopped sprinkling, the track was drying out rapidly, and the mechanics were getting into wheel changing order. The first few cars screamed up the rise out of the Tiergarten and went straight into their pits.

Of the leaders, only Ronnie Peterson hung onto his knobbies, and he lead Mass

GRAND PRIX OF GERMANY, FORMULA ONE DRIVING CHAMPIONSHIP, ADENAU, GERMANY, NURBURGRING, AUGUST 1, 1976.

ENTRY & QUALIFYING

1-James Hunt, McLaren-Ford M23, 7:06.5; 2-Niki Lauda, Ferrari 312T2, 7:07.4; 3-Patrick Depailler, Elf-Tyrrell P34, 7:08.8; 4-Hans Stuck, March, 7:09.1; 5-Clay Regazzoni, Ferrari 312T2, 7:09.3; 6-Jacques Laffite, Sigler-Matra, 7:11.13; 7-Carlos Pace, Brabham-Alfa Romeo, 7:12.0; 8-Jody Scheckter, Elf-Tyrrell, 7:12.2; 9-Jochen Mass, McLaren-Ford, 7:13.0; 10-Carlos Reutemann, 7:14.9; 11-Ronnie Peterson, March-Ford, 7:14.9; 12-Marco Andreoli, JPS-Ford, 7:15.1; 13-Vittorio Brambilla, March-Ford, 7:17.7; 14-Alain Jones, Surtees-Ford, 7:19.9; 15-Rolf Stommelen, Martini-Brabham, 7:21.6; 16-Gunnar Nilsson, JPS-Ford, 7:23.0; 17-Chris Amon, Ensign, 7:23.1; 18-Tom Pryce, Shadow-Ford, 7:23.3; 19-John Watson, Penske-Ford, 7:23.5; 20-Emerson Fittipaldi, Copersucar F004, 7:28.0; 21-Arturo Merzario, Williams-Ford, 7:28.8; 22-Harald Ertl, Hesketh, 7:30.0; 23-John-Pierre Jarier, Shadow-Ford, 7:30.5; 24-Brett Lunger, Surtees, 7:32.7; 25-Guy Edwards, Hesketh-Ford, 7:38.6; 26-A.P. Rossi, Elf-Tyrrell 007, 7:48.5; 27-(Reserve) Henri Pescarolo, Surtees FS19, 8:04.2.

RESULTS

1-Hunt, 34 laps in 1:14:42.7 for an average speed of 117.112mph; 2-Scheckter, 14; 3-Mass, 14; 4-Pace, 14; 5-Nilsson, 14; 6-Stommelen, 14; 7-Watson, 14; 8-Pryce, 14; 9-Regazzoni, 14; 10-Jones, 14; 11-Jarier, 14; 12-Andreoli, 14; 13-Fittipaldi, 14; 14-Rossi, 13; 15-Edwards, 13.

DNF: 16-Merzario, 3, no brakes; 17-Brambilla, 0, crashed; 18-Depailler, 0, crash with Regazzoni; 19-Reutemann, 0, engine failure; 20-Peterson, 0, crash.

DNS: 21-Lauda, 0, crash; 22-Langer, 0, crash; 23-Ertl, 0, crash; 24-Stuck, 0, clutch failure; 25-Laffite, 0, gearbox failure; 26-Amon, 0, driver withdrew; Henri Pescarolo and Lella Lombardi, 0. Both K.A.M. cars were impounded by the police upon court inspection awarded to driver Loris Kessel—alleged breach of contract.

on around the South and North curves and away into the country again. But Jochen's McLaren went ahead of the March somewhere on the climb up to the Karrussel. The crowd at the start/finish sent up a great cheer when they heard that, and when Jochen popped up into sight again he was greeted by a wave of sheer German joy. He was 29 seconds ahead of anybody else then, they all (almost) were in and out of the pits behind him, and as he dropped down into Hatzenbach to start the third lap he seemed to have the race as soundly won as if it were already the 14th and last.

Unfortunately for everybody, it wasn't even lap zero.

Miles behind him, still on his second lap, first on slicks, Niki Lauda somehow lost control of his Ferrari on what should have been a flat-out bit of road.

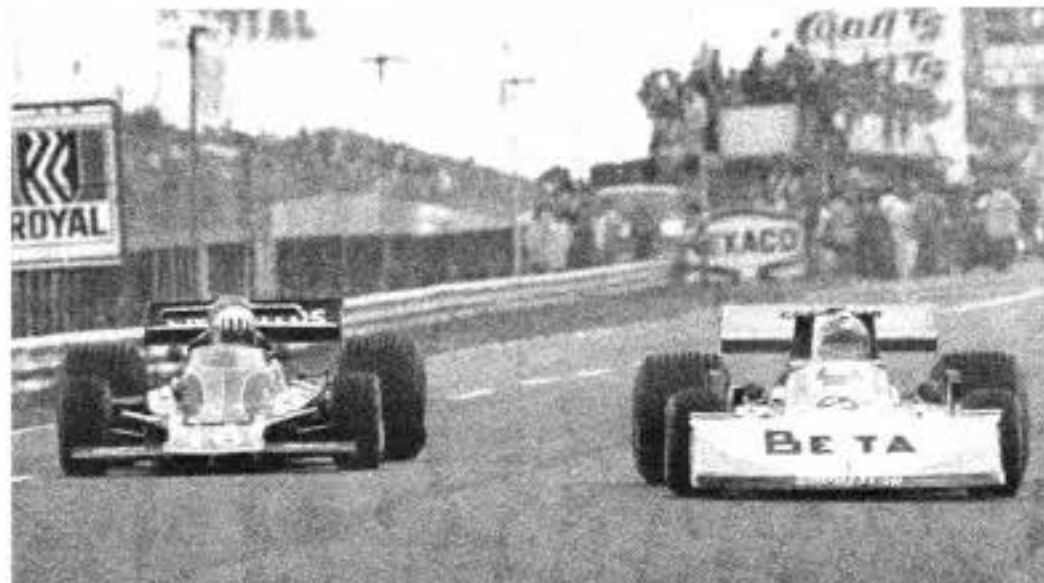
It was after the Adenau crossing, a downhill, left-hand kink approaching the



Number two Ferrari driver Clay Regazzoni tells a group of European journalists what it's like out there.

Bergwerk. A story circulated that one of his just recently changed wheels came loose, other people say that definitely did not happen; anyway the 312T2 went off the edge of the road on the outside at very near maximum speed. It whipped through a mass of catch fencing and slammed into the sloping hillside behind, instantly blew up in a huge ball of flame, and then came spinning back across the road trailing pieces and burning fuel. So violent was the crash that a complete rubber fuel cell was ripped out of the monocoque chassis and spun along the road entirely separate from the rest of the wreckage.

The pack of cars behind were presented with a track that was the next thing to blocked. Guy Edwards found a way through to the left of the burning Ferrari without being damaged himself, but as he was stopping his Hesketh the Surtees of Brett Lunger had no where to go at all. His front wheels skidding helplessly on fuel-muddied dirt, Brett T-boned Lauda's car



Tom Pryce, left, and Vittorio Brambilla have a bit of a dice during the early going, and before the crash of Niki Lauda, which stopped the race.

and shoved it around in the beginning of a pirouette. Harald Ertl's Hesketh stopped that and bounced the Ferrari back into the Surtees. That second impact was hard enough to set off Brett's fire extinguisher system.

Lunger found himself standing in a sea of flames alongside Lauda's cockpit, trying to pull the World Champion from his car. Niki was conscious and trying to escape, but he hadn't been able to unbuckle his shoulder harness. Apparently he'd been trying to get his helmet off so that he could get his chin down far enough to see the problem, for as Brett worked over him the helmet came tumbling off Niki's head.

Brett finally got enough leverage by jumping atop the burning car and straddling the cockpit. Arturo Merzario, who had braked to a halt, got the belts unbuckled and Lauda came free. Brett and he rolled to the ground together.

Niki still was aware of goings-on, and climbed to his feet and took a dozen steps, but by this time there was quite a crowd of fellow drivers gathering and they persuaded him to lie down while they stripped off his charred driving suit and felt around for broken bones. The main injury, though, seemed to be to his face which was severely enough burned that it was bleeding.

Apart from the broken right cheekbone, nasty burns on his hands, head and face, a broken collarbone and two broken ribs, the most serious of Lauda's injuries appeared to be severe damage to his lungs, damage caused when the World Champion breathed in smoke and flame

from his burning car and poisonous gasses given off from his burning plastic seat and steering-wheel cover. As Autoweek went to press doctors in Mannheim, where Lauda remains hospitalized, said it could be as much as 10 days before they know if Niki will survive.

The elaborate Nurburgring safety apparatus apparently worked as planned, for the drivers said there were two marshalls on foot with fire bottles on the scene within seconds, and the Porsche 911 carrying the doctor arrived shortly thereafter. It did take something like five or more minutes to get an ambulance to the scene, it was reported, and the Ferrari kept burning for a similar time.

The race, of course, had been red flagged immediately. The remainder of the 12 cars that had stopped at the scene, plus the other 14 that had gone through before, eventually cycled through the pits for a going over, a change to fresh slick rubber, refueling, and more than two hours after the original start were sent back to the grid for a new race to go the full 14 laps.

The day's second German Grand Prix started just 20 cars. James Hunt was all alone in his Pole position, Lauda's place alongside being left vacant. Lunger and Ertl of course were absent, as the rules allowed no spare cars to be used—even had there been any spare cars available. Additionally Jacques Laffite and Hans Stuck were non compos with transmission troubles, and Chris Amon threw something of a quiet wobbly and decided

Continued On Next Page

'76 ROAD AMERICA PROFESSIONAL

Friday, August 27

PRACTICE AND QUALIFYING

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Sunday, August 29

F5000 HANDICAP 100 Miles

A & B Sports — 60 Miles

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More On: German GP

Continued From Preceding Page
he wanted no part of racing at the Nurburgring.

James Hunt doesn't make very good starts from the front of a grid—he's much more impressive when he's back in the pack and can jump the flag without anybody noticing so much!—but give him a second chance in one day and he usually does better. That was true at Brands Hatch and it was true now at the Nurburgring. This time with no Lauda alongside he got into the South curve ahead of everybody, keeping Clay Regazzoni safely behind, Patrick Depailler from third spot on the grid had his six-wheel Tyrrell third, but up from eighth and in fact alongside his teammate as they went in was Jody Scheckter. Carlos Pace's Brabham-Alfa, up from seventh, was fifth and Mass was sixth this time.

Ronnie Peterson, his March once again painted up in First National City Bank Traveler's Check colors, plunged away through the forest in seventh place, but

only as far as the Flugplatz where he plunged straight off the road. As he described it, the jump itself went ok but as the car landed it "started bouncing" and tore itself from his grasp. This is high speed stuff and the resulting shunt off the outside of the following right-hander totally wrote off the car, but left Ronnie without a mark.

That put Mario Andretti up to seventh at that point, and his JPS was still there miles later as the report flashed back from the Karrussel, but from there on the long, twisting run back to the start/finish several things went wrong. First Regga apparently spun, and Depailler couldn't avoid bouncing off the Ferrari, which put the Tyrrell into the fence at Brunnchen. Again, no driver damage, and Regga carried on. Pace slipped ahead of Scheckter during this excitement, while Andretti made it by Mass when the McLaren went wide onto some grass. Gunnar Nilsson in the other JPS followed through closely, so that when Mario in his turn "fell out of the little Karrussel," that is the concrete half-bowl at the Schwalbenschwanz, Gunnar slipped by him too.

So as Hunt screamed along the long, long main straight in his sixth gear, and eventually popped up in front of the pits,

Lauda On The 'Ring: 'I Simply Don't Think It's Worth The Risk'

Niki Lauda's serious crash during the aborted first attempted running of the German GP was double ironic because of his own personal views about running on the Nurburgring at all. "I simply don't think it's worth the risk," he had gone on record as saying; in fact he as World Champion had been leader of a faction of drivers who want to at least alter and perhaps abandon the famous, classic mountain circuit.

Several months ago the five drivers who are all that is left of the GPDA—these five, Lauda, Fittipaldi, Hunt, Scheckter and Jarier now form the Safety Committee of the F1CA—had a tense meeting to decide whether to go or not to the 'Ring this year. It was a narrow vote finally, three to two, in favor of abiding by an earlier agreement with the organizers. But they were adamant: the German GP will not take place next year unless the circuit is substantially changed.

The fact is, a great many of their fellow drivers are not in agreement, and several of them say they were never consulted and never saw the paper that the Safety Committee apparently circulated amongst some of their like-minded colleagues. So the actual fate of the Nurburgring as we know it is at this point far from sealed.

But what effect will Niki Lauda's very unfortunate crash have on the picture? Certainly many will point a finger and claim, See! He was right! but the kind of crash it was and the severity of the outcome could easily have happened at many other tracks. From first reports, anyway, the safety gear on the side of the track—catch fencing—was torn away by

the careening Ferrari and it went beyond into an earthen embankment. But it came back onto the road, and did not overturn or fly into any ravines—one of the special horrors that admittedly could happen at several points around the 'Ring. The very heavy damage of the car, which so ruptured its fuel tankage as to cause a fire, was apparently caused at least partly by the catch fencing poles. The same objects could well have given the driver his head injuries, as they have done to several drivers in recent seasons.

So this was the kind of accident that could have happened at many other tracks, it would seem, and it might well be unfair to use it as a nail in the coffin of the Nurburgring.

As for another potential criticism of the 14.2 mile circuit, the chance of an accident happening far from any rescue teams, it is agreed by most drivers on the scene that marshalls on foot had arrived with fire bottles "within seconds" and that a Porsche carrying a doctor was there almost immediately afterward. There was to be sure criticism of the length of time it took to get an ambulance to the spot—something between five and seven minutes, according to various accounts—and similarly the burning car, after Lauda was got out of it, burned on for several minutes.

Lauda's fears of a serious accident remain valid for many places at the Nurburgring, but it would be well to be careful about using this particular accident to illustrate his points. As was the case with the Stommelen crash at Barcelona last year, it really was something separate and independent of the core of the controversy beforehand.—Pete Lyons



Alan Jones steams his Surtees TS19 along at the head of a pair of eager F1 runners. Jones ultimately finished in 10th spot.

he had a gap of clear air behind him just over nine seconds long. Then it was Pace's red Brabham second with Scheckter's blue Tyrrell all over him behind. Then another gap until Regazzoni's Ferrari came screaming up the rise, fourth but with Nilsson's JPS, Vittorio Brambilla's March, Andretti's JPS, and Alan Jones' Surtees nose to tail behind. In touch with this was Mass, and then came Tom Pryce's Shadow 10th. After another gap came another close string: Arturo Merzario in the ex-Jacky Ickx Williams, the other Shadow with Jean-Pierre Jarier, John Watson in the Penske PC4, Rolf Stommelen who had done a deal for the third Brabham-Alfa for this race, and Emerson Fittipaldi struggling along in his silver Copersucar. Another long gap and then the last running car at the moment, one of the obsolete 007 Tyrrells driven by newcomer Alessandro Pesenti-Rossi.

Missing therefore were four men: Peter-

son and Depailler from their shunts, Carlos Reutemann from his Brabham-Alfa "just stopping" at the roadside, and Guy Edwards who stopped to visit his pit for several minutes before rejoining, a very distant 17th and last.

One lap or the Nurburgring: as always, full of enough action to make half a dozen somewhere else.

Some miles into the second lap Brambilla evidently had something happen to his brakes and went flying off at Breitscheid, writing off his car. This was announced together with the news that he was all right, and the crowd broke into laughter. You see, it was Vittorio's third major shunt of the weekend. He'd crashed his regular car at the Pflanzgarten jump on Friday, getting the car cocked sideways just before liftoff and failing to catch it as it landed so it veered diagonally into the guardrail. The damage was surprisingly light and he was driving it

Continued On Next Page



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More On: German GP

Continued From Preceding Page

again the next day. That was Saturday, when it rained most of the day, and he lost it again going around the little loop at the top of the pits. "This time she finished!" he told his suffering mechanics with a sheepish smile; it's the smile that saves him every time. He went into the race with the ex-Merzario car (Arturo having been swapped over to Williams for the rest of the year in some obscure backroom deal that ousts Ickx from the team), and pretty shabby it looked with the bottom half still sponsoring "Ovoro" and the top selling "Beta". But not so shabby as when Vittorio walked back from it this third time...

Partway round that second lap Jody squeezed by Other Carlos, and set off alone in second place to see what could be done about the Hunt lead. It was up to 10.3 seconds by the end of that lap, and James had done the lap at 7 minutes 24.1 seconds, which was quickest. Pace came along still third at the end of that, but the gap to the next lot had vanished for Regga was close behind and so was Nilsson. Mass had closed up and overtaken Andretti again, the JPS engine having begun to lose power on this second lap. Jones' impressive run had dissolved in a spin back to 14th place at the Adenau bridge. Stommelen had however pulled up through his bunch and was nearly by Merzario for the lead of it.

Around the third lap Jody was quickest, at 7m 19.1 to James' 19.8, and the gap was under 10 seconds between them. Hey, this might be quite a race after all, with another 11 laps to go. But Hunt had the message, and stepped up just enough to hold the gap steady fourth time around, and after another lap the gap was just over 10 seconds, and James had the lap speed down to 7m 14.4. That broke Jody's resolve, he realized he was going to be second, and from then on his deficiency



James Hunt jumps his McLaren M23 through the German forest on his way to a win in the German Grand Prix.

Chris Mullen Photos

began to grow: 12.1 seconds, 11.9, then 14.6, 17.5, and 21.7 after 10 laps.

So Hunt looked free and clear to his fourth GP victory of the season, but with a couple of laps to go Scheckter's pit signalled him some new resolve. "Aw, they gave me a bogus gap back to Regga," he explained. "I thought I was closer than he was, so I tried as hard as I could again." It was noticeable from the sidelines, as Jody had the nimble six-wheeler cocked sideways out of every one of the

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Rolf Stommelen, back for his first GP of the year, chats with car owner Bernie Ecclestone. Stommelen brought the team's extra Brabham BT45/Alfa Romeo home in sixth place.

174 corners around the circuit. On the 13th lap, one to go, he did a lap at 7m 10.8s, to ace James out of something, at least. "And I made a mistake on that one, too..."

Regazzoni was actually less of a threat than he thought anyway. At the end of the 12th lap the surviving Ferrari was late, and eventually came into the pits with its nose wing all curled up. Clay was well out

of the points by the time he got out again with a new one.

Andretti had likewise stopped in the pits, his engine's high-speed miss getting so bad he decided to seek a cure. Team Lotus strapped on a new battery and sent him back out, but the cure only lasted about a lap, and after that the miss came back. "It's a damn shame, 'cause she was really workin'. I was finally gettin' to know the track a little, too."

So the final stage of the race was just a dice for third place between Pace and Mass. Carlos, who had been looking and feeling pretty grey during practice with a bad case of flu, was going like a champion during the race and afterward, although he was pretty tired, he denied he'd slacked off because of illness. It was the car that was going a little off, its handling getting unstable as the tanks emptied and the engine's all-too-familiar poor low-speed pickup worsening too. Mass finally caught him up and passed, to finish third in the full scale re-run of the race he'd "won" the first time around.

Nilsson came home fifth, a fine result for both him and the team, but even better was Stommelen's one point for Brabham in his first GP this year. Considering that after legal difficulties took away his first ride of the weekend (when the R.A.M. Brabhams were both impounded for breach of contract on the instigation of driver Loris Kessel) and he never sat in the Alfa car until the rain-soaked Saturday he did well indeed.

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